

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) ~~A footwear component of An interchangeable upper portion~~ of an article of footwear, the footwear component comprising:

an interchangeable upper portion, the interchangeable upper portion defining an outer perimeter;

one or more releasable fasteners disposed along at least a portion of the outer perimeter of the interchangeable upper portion and adapted for releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to an article of footwear; and

one or more alignment mechanisms means disposed on the interchangeable upper portion away from the outer perimeter of the interchangeable upper portion for aligning the interchangeable upper portion on an article of footwear prior to releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to an article of footwear.

2. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper portion of claim 1, wherein the one or more alignment mechanisms means include hook and loop fasteners.

3. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper portion of claim 1, further comprising shoelaces.

4. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper
~~portion~~ of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the interchangeable upper portion
comprises a breathable material.

5. (Currently Amended) The footwear component of interchangeable upper
~~portion~~ of claim 13, wherein at least a portion of the interchangeable upper portion
comprises a portion of breathable material, and wherein the portion of breathable material
on the interchangeable upper portion can correspond[[s]] with a portion of breathable
material on a fixed upper portion of an article of footwear, and thereby can allow airflow
through the breathable portions to a wearer's foot.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The combination of the footwear component
~~interchangeable upper portion~~ of claim 1 and an article of footwear, wherein the
interchangeable upper portion is releasably fastened to the an article of footwear.

8. (Currently Amended) The combination interchangeable upper portion of
claim 7, wherein the article of footwear comprises:

a fixed upper portion;

a sole fixedly connected to the fixed upper portion; and

one or more releasable fasteners for engaging the one or more releasable fasteners on the interchangeable upper portion and for releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to the article of footwear.

9. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper portion of claim 8, wherein the fixed upper portion further comprises one or more alignment mechanisms means for receiving the one or more alignment mechanisms means of the interchangeable upper portion of an article of footwear.

10. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper portion of claim 9, wherein the one or more alignment mechanisms means of the interchangeable upper portion are engaging the one or more alignment mechanisms of means from the interchangeable upper portion.

11. (Currently Amended) The footwear component interchangeable upper portion of claim 8, wherein the interchangeable upper portion substantially covers the fixed upper portion.

12. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear comprising:

an upper a fixed upper portion defining a bottom exterior perimeter;

a sole defining an outer exterior perimeter, the sole fixedly connected to the fixed upper portion such that the outer exterior perimeter of the sole generally corresponds with a substantial portion of the bottom exterior perimeter of the fixed upper portion to form an outer perimeter of the article of footwear; and

one or more releasable fasteners for releasably fastening an interchangeable upper portion to the article of footwear, the one or more releasable fasteners being generally disposed along at least a portion of the outer perimeter of the article of footwear; and

one or more alignment mechanisms for aligning the interchangeable upper portion with the fixed upper portion prior to releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to the article of footwear, the one or more alignment mechanisms being disposed on the fixed upper portion away from the outer perimeter of the article of footwear.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 12-interchangeable upper portion of claim 13, wherein the one or more alignment mechanisms means-include hook and loop fasteners.

15. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 12, further comprising an interchangeable upper portion ~~of an article of footwear~~, the interchangeable upper portion comprising:

one or more releasable fasteners for releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to the article of footwear.

16. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 15, wherein the interchangeable upper portion further comprises one or more alignment mechanisms ~~means~~ for aligning the interchangeable upper portion on the article of footwear prior to releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to ~~the an~~ article of footwear.

17. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear interchangeable upper ~~portion~~ of claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the fixed interchangeable upper portion comprises a breathable material.

18. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear interchangeable upper ~~portion~~ of claim ~~12~~¹⁷, wherein at least a portion of the fixed upper portion comprises a breathable material, and wherein the portion of breathable material on the fixed interchangeable upper portion ~~can correspond~~^{can} with a portion of breathable material on an interchangeable ~~a fixed upper portion of an article of footwear~~, and thereby can allow airflow through the breathable portions to a wearer's foot.

19. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim ~~16~~¹⁵, wherein the one or more alignment mechanisms ~~means~~ of the interchangeable upper portion are

engaging the one or more alignment mechanisms means of the article of footwear ~~from the interchangeable upper portion.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 15~~14~~, wherein the interchangeable upper portion is releasably fastened to the article of footwear.

21. (Original) The article of footwear of claim 12, further comprising an interchangeable upper portion releasably fastened to the article of footwear.

22. (Original) The article of footwear of claim 21, wherein the interchangeable upper portion substantially covers the fixed upper portion.

23. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear comprising:
a fixed upper portion ~~of an article of footwear~~ defining a bottom exterior perimeter;

a sole defining an outer exterior perimeter, the sole fixedly connected to the fixed upper portion such that the outer exterior perimeter of the sole generally corresponds with a substantial portion of the bottom exterior perimeter of the fixed upper portion to form an outer perimeter of the article of footwear; and

one or more releasable fasteners releasably fastening an interchangeable upper portion of an article of footwear to the article of footwear, the one or more releasable fasteners being generally disposed along at least a portion of the outer perimeter of the article of footwear; and

one or more alignment mechanisms for aligning the interchangeable upper portion with the article of footwear prior to releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to the article of footwear, the one or more alignment mechanisms disposed away from the outer perimeter of the article of footwear.

24. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein one or more of the one or more alignment mechanisms is disposed on the fixed upper portion and a corresponding one or more of the one or more alignment mechanisms is disposed on the interchangeable upper portion ~~the fixed upper portion comprises one or more alignment means, and wherein the interchangeable upper portion further comprises one or more alignment means for receiving the one or more alignment means of the fixed upper portion.~~

25. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 24, wherein the one or more alignment mechanisms ~~means~~ of the fixed upper portion are engaging the one or more alignment mechanisms of ~~means from~~ the interchangeable upper portion.

26. (Original) The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein the interchangeable upper portion substantially covers the fixed upper portion.

27. (Currently Amended) A method of releasably fastening an interchangeable upper portion of an article of footwear to a fixed upper portion of an article of footwear, the article of footwear defining an outer exterior perimeter, the method comprising:

engaging one or more alignment mechanisms ~~means~~ on the interchangeable upper portion with one or more alignment mechanisms ~~means~~ on the article of footwear, the one or more alignment mechanisms on the interchangeable upper portion and on the article of footwear being disposed away from the outer exterior perimeter; and

releasably fastening the interchangeable upper portion to the fixed upper portion along at least a portion of the outer exterior perimeter.

28. (New) The footwear component of claim 1, wherein the interchangeable upper portion is large enough to substantially cover a fixed upper portion of an article of footwear when releasably fastened thereto.

29. (New) The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the interchangeable upper portion is large enough to substantially cover a fixed upper portion of an article of footwear when releasably fastened thereto.

30. (New) The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein the one or more releasable fasteners comprise zippers.

31. (New) The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein a portion of at least one of the one or more releasable fasteners disposed along at least a portion of the outer perimeter of the article of footwear extends away from the sole at a heel portion of the article of footwear.